

\$18 million in community funding projects that will allow the restoration and preservation of our community's Black history, that will support critical early childhood education programs, that will promote small businesses and innovation and economic development and infrastructure, and that will support a vast array of much-needed mental health and other social service programs in our rapidly growing community.

To my staff, all that we have accomplished would not have been possible without you. Thank you for your hard work and dedication, and I look forward to seeing what you do next.

To the residents of Georgia's Seventh District, thank you again for the honor of representing our community in Congress.

HONORING THE LIFE OF LESLEE KATHRYN BUHLER ALEXANDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. KUSTOFF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUSTOFF. Madam Speaker, many in the Chamber know our friend Senator Lamar Alexander, but many of you may not know that earlier this year he lost his wife of 53 years, Leslee Kathryn Buhler Alexander, better known to all of us as "Honey."

Honey was a household name in Tennessee, not for being the first lady of Tennessee or the wife of a United States Senator, but for being the voice of so many across the State.

Honey grew up in Texas. She graduated high school in Austin in 1963 and received her college degree from Smith College in 1967. Honey later joined the Washington, D.C., staff of United States Senator John G. Tower.

Now, that summer, during a softball game between Senator Tower's staff and the staff of Senator Howard Baker, Jr., Honey met a young Baker staffer, Lamar Alexander. Honey and Lamar dated for about 18 months and married in 1969.

When Honey, Lamar, and their 11-month-old son, Drew, moved to Nashville in 1970, Honey began to focus on the health and well-being of families and children. She said: "Strong families make strong children."

Later, as Tennessee's first lady, Honey led the statewide Healthy Children Initiative with the goal of providing prenatal healthcare for every child. Honey dedicated her life to the well-being of our next generation.

Honey Alexander cofounded Leadership Nashville, served Family & Children's Service as president of its board and chaired multiple events, and additionally served on the boards of the Adventure Science Center, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, the Junior League of Nashville, the Dede Wallace Center, and the Hermitage.

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Honey and Lamar had three more children: Leslee, Kathryn, and Will.

Through it all, Honey was a steadfast and committed partner during her husband's honorable career in public service.

Honey campaigned during Lamar's six races for Governor and United States Senator, served 8 years as the first lady of Tennessee, moved to Knoxville when Lamar was the president of the University of Tennessee, and then moved to Washington when Lamar was the United States Education Secretary and finally U.S. Senator. When Lamar was campaigning for President, Honey traveled on her own to over 80 different Iowa communities.

During the 1996 Presidential campaign in New Hampshire, Honey was interviewed on the Larry King Show on CNN. Larry King asked Honey this question: Do you really want to be the First Lady and live in the White House?

Honey answered in her own way, very succinctly with one word: "No."

That was Honey. It was clear to all of us that Honey was happiest at home with her family. I think that Honey summed it up well when she wrote: "The most important facets of my life remain the same: supporting Lamar; mothering the children; helping others; and nurturing good physical, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual health in me and those closest to me."

When Nashville's Family and Children's Service named its new home the Honey Alexander Center, the organization said, "Honey Alexander has dedicated her life to the service of others." In my opinion, that really is the most suitable statement.

As a child, Honey's daughter Leslee wrote in a school essay: "My mother is the lioness who keeps the family in hand and allows us to live and grow."

We should all be so lucky to have a Honey Alexander in our lives.

As we grieve the loss of one of our favorite first ladies, we know that Tennessee is a better place to live and raise a family because of the work of this wonderful wife, mother, and friend.

From Roberta and me to Lamar, Leslee, Kathryn, and Will: We know your hearts are heavy this holiday season, but we want to say thank you. Thank you for allowing your wife and your mother to be a lioness for us all.

SOVEREIGN RIGHTS OF THE NATIVE HAWAIIAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. KAHELE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KAHELE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on a critical issue for indigenous people of the United States, specifically Native Hawaiians.

Yesterday, in this august body, I introduced H.R. 9614 to amend the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920, legislation critical to the preservation, protection, and restoration of the sovereign rights of the Native Hawaiian people.

Madam Speaker, 129 years ago, on January 17, 1893, 13 White men with the support of U.S. troops of the USS *Boston* illegally overthrew the Kingdom of Hawaii. In the years that would follow, the kingdom's beloved monarch, Queen Liliuokalani, was imprisoned; millions of acres of sovereign royal lands were stolen; *olelo* Hawaii, the Hawaiian language, was prohibited to be taught or spoken in public schools; the United States illegally annexed Hawaii via a simple majority joint resolution after failing to gain treaty ratification in the United States Senate; and by 1920, Native Hawaiians—decimated by Western diseases, the loss of their land, culture, and identity—were on the brink of extinction.

Realizing the plight of his people, Hawaii's second Native Hawaiian and territorial Delegate to the Congress, Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaʻole, 102 years ago, authored one of the most important pieces of Federal legislation for Hawaiians, the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920.

The act would set aside 203,000 acres to restore land and dignity to Native Hawaiians of 1/32 blood quantum, giving them leasing opportunities for homesteading, farming, ranching, and mercantile purposes.

However, Delegate Kuhio ran into fierce opposition and was forced to compromise with Western powerful sugar and ranching business interests by accepting a blood quantum requirement of 50 percent to qualify for a lease. This requirement would serve as a poison pill in the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act dividing Native Hawaiians—a divide that remains to this day.

Inadequately funded and managed by the United States from 1921 to 1959, the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act and its day-to-day management was punted to the new State of Hawaii as a condition and requirement of statehood in 1959.

Realizing that Native Hawaiians were being quickly displaced from their land due to interracial marriages, the State of Hawaii and the United States lowered the blood quantum requirement for qualified beneficiary successors to 25 percent.

Madam Speaker, 100 years later, due to interracial marriages and blended families, many descendants of beneficiaries do not meet the 25 percent requirement for successorship.

In addition, the failure of both the State of Hawaii and the United States to meet its fiduciary, execution, management, and oversight obligations to the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act has resulted in less than 10,000 Native Hawaiians being awarded a lease while an applicant wait list of almost 29,000 exists to this day.

As the applicant wait list grows, the median average age of an applicant grows, creating a sense of urgency as thousands have died on the wait list, and thousands more will die on the wait list, never fulfilling the true vision of Prince Kuhio to Aina